

HAITI COUNTRY PROFILE



FAST FACTS



Haiti is located in the Caribbean and shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic to its east. Haiti won independence from France in 1804 making it the second country (the first being the United States) in the Americas to free itself from colonial rule and the first in the world to ban slavery. The people of Haiti are both determined and resilient as was evident in the recovery efforts after the 2010 earthquake, however natural disasters along with economic, political and social challenges have resulted in 80 per cent of the population living on less than \$2(US) a day.



Capital: Port-au-Prince



Population: 10.85 million



Total land area: 27,750 sq. km



Borders: Dominican Republic



Official Language: French, Haitian Creole



Religion(s): Roman Catholic (55%), Protestant (29%), Vodou (2.1%)



Currency: Haitian Gourde (HG) (€1=77HG)



Climate: Generally a hot and humid tropical climate. Dry season from November to January, February through May is the wet season.



Terrain: Occupies the western third of Hispaniola, having two peninsulas which are separated by the Gonave Gulf. Rugged, mountainous land with three major mountain ranges.



Natural resources: Bauxite, copper, calcium carbonate, gold, marble and hydropower.



National days: January 1st Independence Day, January 2nd Heroes day/ Ancestors Day.



National symbol: A palm tree with a Phrygian cap placed as a symbol of freedom, above the ribbon with the motto are two pieces of chain with a broken link which symbolises the broken chain of slavery. The National Moto is l'Union Fait La Force (Union Makes Strength).



National Anthem: La Dessalinienne



Key Landmarks: The Citadelle, Marie- Jeanne Cave, Fort Jacques



Wildlife: Solenodon and Hutia (both small rodents). Sea mammals – whales, dolphins and manatees. Many different birds including flamingos. Reptilian and amphibian species (lizards, crocodiles, turtles and frogs).



HAITI is ranked 168th out of 189 countries in the 2017 Human Development Index (HDI): A statistic of life expectancy, education, and per capita amongst others.


HAITI: A TIMELINE




1492: Christopher Columbus arrives and names the Island Hispaniola (Little Spain)

1496: First European settlement in the western hemisphere is created in Santo Domingo – now the capital of Dominican Republic

1697: Spain cedes the western part of Hispaniola to France and Haiti (the land of mountains) is born

1801: Toussaint Louverture (a former black slave) conquers Haiti, abolishes slavery and proclaims himself the governor- general of an autonomous government over all of Hispaniola 

1802: French forces led by Napoleon's brother – in-law Charles Leclerc fails to conquer Haitian interior


1804: Haiti becomes Independent from France and Jean-Jacques Dessalines declares himself emperor 

1806: Dessalines assassinated – Haiti is divided into a black controlled north and a mixed race controlled south


1818-43: Pierre Boyer unifies Haiti but the black population is excluded from power


1915: The USA invades Haiti

1934: USA withdraws from Haiti but maintains fiscal control until 1947


1956: Voodoo physician Francois "Papa Doc-" Duvalier seizes power in a military coup. He is then elected president the following year 


1964: Duvalier declares himself president for life and a dictatorship is established with the Tanton Macoutes militia. His son Jean-Claude or "Baby Doc" succeeds his father following his death in 1971

1986: Jean-Claude flees Haiti and is replaced by Lieutenant-General Henri Namphy. Following a coup in 1988 a civil government is established under military control 

1990: Haiti holds its first free and peaceful election and Jean- Bertrand Aristide is elected President. Aristide is ousted by a coup in 1991 which triggers sanctions from the US and the Organisation of the American States. The military regime relinquishes power in 1994 in the face of invasion from the USA. Aristide returns as president 


2004: Celebrations marking 200 years of Independence lead to an uprising against President Aristide and he goes into exile


2004: Severe floods hit Haiti and the Dominican Republic which leave more than 5000 dead or disappeared. UN peacekeepers arrive to help flood survivors and international donors pledge more than \$1 billion in aid 


2004: Deadly political gang violence erupts 

2005: Hurricane Dennis kills at least 45 people

2006: The first general elections since former President Aristide was overthrown. Rene Preval is declared the winner. The USA partially lift the arms embargo from 1991

2008: USA and World Bank announce extra food aid. Nearly 800 people are killed and hundreds injured as Haiti is hit by a series of storms and hurricanes 

2010: Up to 300,000 people are killed when a magnitude 7.0 earthquake hits the capital and the surrounding areas. This is the worst earthquake to hit Haiti in 200 years. International donors pledge \$5.3 billion 

2010: Cholera outbreak: 3,500 people die which triggers violent protests 

2011: The death toll reaches 6,000 from the cholera outbreak

2017: Jovenel Moise is elected president

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/1202857.stm



KEY WORDS

- **Colonial rule:** a country or area under political control of another country and occupied by settlers from that country.
- **Cholera:** an infectious disease that causes severe diarrhoea leading to dehydration and death if untreated. Caused by eating food or drinking water contaminated with bacterium called Vibrio cholera
- **Natural disaster:** A natural event such as a flood, earthquake, drought or storm which causes widespread damage and loss of life.



The world must work together to help achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 13 and 16 in Haiti

GOAL 1 NO POVERTY



End poverty and all its forms and provide protections for the poor and vulnerable.

Poverty exists in all societies in the world. What can you do in your school/ community which will help end poverty?



GOAL 13 CLIMATE ACTION

Natural disasters will continue to disrupt the lives of the Haitian people if Climate Change is not tackled globally. Urgent action is needed to combat climate change and its impacts. *What can be done to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions?*

GOAL 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.

Haiti has a long history of political unrest which has led to outbreaks of violence. What can be done to build stronger institutions and promote peace?

THE EARTHQUAKE IN 2010 EIGHT YEARS ON

On the January 12th 2010 an earthquake in Haiti claimed over 300,000 lives and displaced more than 1.5million people. Eight years on 2.5 million Haitians are still in need of humanitarian aid. Following the earthquake a string of natural disasters has plagued the nation, giving the people little chance to recover.



Vital public institutions were destroyed – schools, hospitals and government buildings. The earthquake also destroyed crops and irrigation canals. This hurt Haiti tremendously as a country that relies heavily on agriculture and farming.

The cholera outbreak that followed further placed pressure on the already strained country, affecting more that 6% of the population. Extreme poverty in Haiti, a distrust of international humanitarian organisations and a history of political unrest has made recovery for Haiti a long and slow process.

Source: (https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/haiti-earthquake-anniversary_us_5875108de4b02b5f858b3f9c00)



What is Concern doing?

Concern has been working in Haiti since 1994. We respond to emergencies as they arise and run long term development programmes in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and livelihoods.

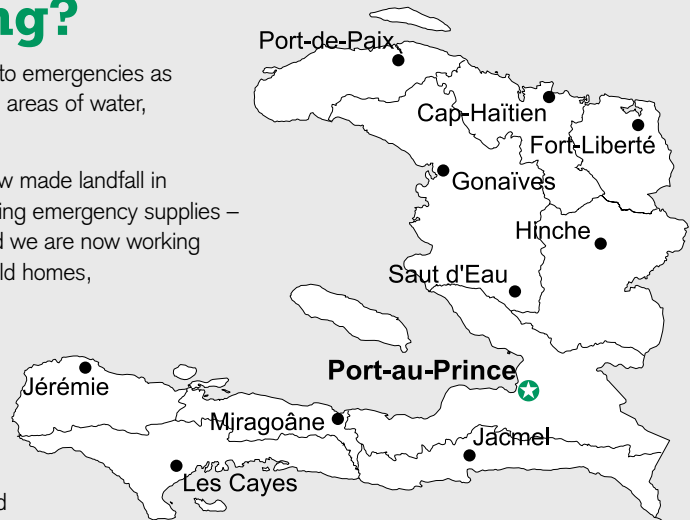
Emergency response: In October 2016, Hurricane Matthew made landfall in Haiti. Our team responded in the immediate aftermath providing emergency supplies – including blankets, jerry cans, aquatabs and kitchen sets, and we are now working with communities on the Haitian island of La Gonave to rebuild homes, repair critical community infrastructure and re-establish their livelihood options.

Rehousing families: Over the last few years we've been applying an innovative "rental subsidy, cash grant" approach to rehousing people displaced by the earthquake. So far, Concern has helped to rehouse over 8,938 families. A twenty-year urban regeneration project has been developed with the community in Grand Ravine, Port-au-Prince, which will benefit 20,000 people. We are working with partners, including Catholic Relief Service (CRS), to redevelop the area through the provision of housing, repairing the ravine main road, the installation of street lighting and other facilities. We are also providing livelihood training to young people to improve their prospects of employment.

Water and hygiene: Concern drills boreholes, rehabilitates wells and rainwater-harvesting cisterns and helps communities set up committees to manage their water. We also train people on good hygiene to prevent diseases like cholera and diarrhoea.

Livelihoods and resilience: We are working with urban and rural communities to improve livelihoods and income generating activities. In Saut d'Eau, for example, nearly 1,500 mango and avocado farmers improved their skills, productivity and market access. A tourism and development programme helped local entrepreneurs open five bed and breakfast inns, and in La Gonave over 7,500 men and women were trained to protect local fisheries, which has helped to improve income and food security.


Promoting literacy: Concern's education programme focusses on improving literacy in primary schools through instruction in the Haitian mother-tongue, Créole. We provide intensive support and training to teachers in 24 schools. We also work with parents and communities to encourage and monitor children's learning.




Want to Learn MORE?

Concern Worldwide's Active Citizenship team run workshops for students during the academic year. If you are interested in exploring and critically examining global issues in the classroom please contact us on schools@concern.net

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READ



8 Years after Haiti's Earthquake, Millions Still Need Aid - The resilience of the Haitian people has endured through years of natural disasters.

<https://blog.concern.net/concern50-staff-haiti>

WATCH



Videos of the programmes we deliver including how we responded to the 2010 earthquake:

<https://www.concern.net/news-blogs/concern-blog/video-building-shelters-haiti>

ACT



Raise awareness about Haiti in your school and local community.

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